

MINUTES
FORT MYERS BEACH
Anchorage Advisory Committee
Town Hall
2525 Estero Boulevard
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931

Wednesday, September 16, 2020

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Light. Members present: Robert Beasley, Ted Lawwill, Katherine Light, Sam Lurie and Mike Ratliff.

Excused: Greg Holmes

Staff: Public Works Director Chelsea O’Riley and Harbormaster Austin Gilchrist.

Council Liaison: Rexann Hosafros

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 15, 2020

MOTION: AAC Member Lurie moved to approve the minutes; second by AAC Member Ratliff.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

V. MOORING FIELD AND STAFF REPORT

Finance Director Robert Lange provided a financial report. AAC Lawwill thanked Director Lange for the data. Chair Light noted that occupancy figures were not in the report. Director Lange replied that he would get the information to them. He added that the numbers in the report were preliminary as far as the audit was concerned. AAC Member Lawwill clarified that the occupancy and income report formats would not change. Director Lange stated that they could contact him if they needed additional information.

Harbormaster Gilchrist reported that the pump-out scheduling increased outside the Mooring Field. He noted there were about 22 boats anchored west of the bridge. Four were on the bottom, three were on the sandbar and one was on private property. All were tagged as derelict vessels and were awaiting removal. He explained the process to speed up boat removal. He stated that a piling was hit in the east field and the welcome sign was hit and was replaced. He was working on replacing buoys. He revealed that the boat fire at Salty Sam’s did not affect the Mooring Field. He commented that they were collecting dinghies and contacting owners to claim them. He noted that the Town was developing a procedure to get reimbursed. He stated that they had been enforcing the pennant line regiments set forth. A new pontoon boat was purchased, running and would be the new maintenance boat for the Mooring Field.

Chair Light questioned why they collected dinghies. Harbormaster Gilchrist replied that some were abandoned and one was tied to the side of a vessel and filled up with water. He stated that once they were submerged, they did not stay afloat.

Chair Light commented that one could no longer add additional lines with the new mooring ball design. Harbormaster Gilchrist responded that they had a swivel problem and they could add an independent shackle so the pennant line could swivel independently. He recommended that they run a line through the swivel and add a swivel in as a centerpiece of the bridle. Chair Light stated that the design did not allow you to attach extra lines as backups during a storm. Director O'Riley noted that they would contact the engineer. AAC Member Ratliff requested a diagram of the current mooring system. Harbormaster Gilchrist replied that he would include one at the next meeting.

Director O'Riley stated that three delinquencies were filed in court last week. She reported that four recently graduated FGCU finance interns were there for the semester and two were working on the Mooring Field data.

She indicated that she would receive weekly records from Matanzas because some people were not paying on the first of each month. She noted that a gentleman who owed money had been sent a certified letter. She described the process of collecting delinquent funds. She explained that many agencies were working on removing derelict vessels and Harbormaster Gilchrist took the lead on the project.

Director O'Riley commented that they received \$12,500.00 from the Florida Boating Infrastructure Grant for the design of the expanded dinghy dock at Bayside Park. She reported that they were waiting for the fully executed document back from Lee County Department of Natural Resources for the \$50,000.00 WCIND grant with a \$15,000.00 match by the Town.

Director O'Riley stated that Marine Resources Task Force (MRTF) was discussing derelict vessels. She discussed opening the Mooring Field during storms.

Director O'Riley explained that liveaboards would be treated differently with Dockwa and the address for Matanzas would be removed from contracts. She stated that Dockwa was live and training was scheduled for next week. Patrons would be notified after training was complete. She commented that on October 1, 2020, they would use Dockwa exclusively. She indicated that an email address was required. Director O'Riley provided an onscreen review of Dockwa. She confirmed that spots were assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. She encouraged AAC Members to familiarize themselves with Dockwa.

VI. EXPANSION OF THE MOORING FIELD UPDATE

Director O'Riley reported that they received four letters of rejection and two rescinded their letters, which left two rejections. She remarked that she was waiting on the final review from the DEP and the permit from the Army Corps of Engineers.

VII. UPLAND SERVICE PROVIDER UPDATE

Director O'Riley stated that the provider was put on hold so Council could investigate alternative locations. Chair Light created a timeline of past actions and research by the AAC. She stated that AAC members never decided to take the service provider in house and now they were tasked with finding a site. She noted that Bay Oaks did not have water access and was not a viable option. She indicated that if they took it in house, it had to be better than what it was. Liaison Hosafros

mentioned that she was responsible for bringing it back to the AAC because she was trying to slow down Town Council.

AAC Member Lawwill questioned how they could select a site without a business plan. AAC Member Beasley agreed and noted that Matanzas did a great job. He expressed concern regarding the future with Matanzas in the event they sold their place or decided not to provide services.

AAC Member Lurie noted that a submerged lease by Topps was available for sale and bordered the Bay Oaks property. Director O'Riley replied that the Town would not be involved due to potential civil issues with the owner of the lease.

AAC Member Ratliff reviewed the five potential sites and he did not think the location at Bay Oaks was great and could present issues with permitting. He did not see Virginia St. or Topps as viable options. He agreed that the financial end had to be addressed at the beginning. His choices were to continue to work with Matanzas or to choose one of the options with Harbor House.

Director O'Riley reminded AAC Members that their voices were influential even though the AAC was advisory in nature.

Chair Light noted that the site at Bay Oaks did not have water access. She questioned what the cost was to buy the Harbor House space. Director O'Riley replied that she would talk to individual members after the meeting. Chair Light reviewed the Harbor House option. AAC Member Lawwill was comfortable with the Harbor House options and questioned whether they could create a plan to determine costs before making recommendations. AAC Member Beasley agreed with keeping Matanzas or move forward with Harbor House options.

Harbormaster Gilchrist described demographic changes on the Island and stated that the Mooring Field had to advance. He noted that the Mooring Field was not competitive with other fields and current solutions were to solve problems down the road. He stated that their decisions had to reflect the future. He did not think that the Harbor House was the solution and he described the renovations to Gulf Marine.

Director O'Riley discussed reducing the financial burden to the taxpayers. AAC Member Lawwill commented that they had been trying to obtain the finances for five years. Chair Light agreed that they never received the numbers for bringing the provider in house. Director O'Riley remarked that the Town Manager determined that they could handle the same amount that Matanzas charged. Liaison Hosafros suggested that permitting to cut mangroves at Bay Oaks might not take a long time and she would not take the site off the table. She indicated that it was a good time to investigate the location since they were renovating the entire site. Director O'Riley remarked that the mangrove permits were expensive and there were pros and cons with each site.

AAC Member Lurie questioned the condominium association fees, current rules and regulations associated with the Harbor House. AAC Member Lawwill stated that they had to do something since what they had was inadequate. AAC Member Beasley believed that they needed to look at the future and take the upland service provider in house at some point.

MOTION: Chair Light moved to recommend that the Town explore taking it in house because they had to expand the facilities and the two places to investigate were Bay Oaks and Harbor House; no second.

AAC Member Ratliff questioned the timeline for the Bay Oaks option and the overall investment. Director O'Riley noted that they had one more year with Matanzas, but she suggested that they would work with the Town. Discussion was held regarding challenges with water access at Bay Oaks.

MOTION: AAC Member Beasley moved to recommend to Council they consider taking it in house and the AAC identified Harbor House and Bay Oaks but were open to other suggestions and they would like to know the costs involved with both locations and other possible technical and physical challenges to compare to keeping it as is; second by AAC Member Lawwill?

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Director O’Riley stated that staff would provide as much data as possible before their next meeting.

MOTION: AAC Member Ratliff moved to recommend that the Town look into purchasing the piece of property by Topps listed at \$55,000.00 with a clean title to possibly dock the pump-out boat; second by AAC Member Lawwill.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Director O’Riley noted she would perform due diligence internally and suggested that AAC Members do the same.

VIII. STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Tabled until the next meeting.

IX. MEMBER ITEMS AND REPORTS

Chair Light reviewed her October presentation to Council. She questioned whether they were advertising. Director O’Riley replied that money was in the budget. Chair Light questioned the status of having Cruiser’s Appreciation Day (CAD) next April. No items by other members.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

XI. SET NEXT MEETING AGENDA - add reorganization and communication plan

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Chair Light moved to adjourn the meeting; second by AAC Member Lawwill

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

Adopted _____ with/without changes. Motion by _____
(DATE)

Vote: _____ Signature: _____

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